Character Comparison Essay, Research Paper

Character Comparison

Harold Krebs in ” Soldier’s Home” and Uncle Fred in “My Uncle Fred” both have one thing in common. They have experiences about a World War. Nonetheless, the two men have certain outstanding differences with regards to their characters.

In “Soldier’s Home”, we encounter Harold Krebs, who is the main character coming back from Germany after the war to his home state of Oklahoma. When he came, people had already welcomed all the other soldiers that came back from the war. To the people in the town, it was rather strange that Krebs was coming late. Some people asked him why he came late and also if it was true that the good soldiers always came back late. Surprisingly, he did not want to talk about the war. He decided to talk about the war when no one was interested in his stories. The only way he could get audience about the war was for him to lie. Uncle Fred on the other hand, was a real soldier who did not volunteer to join the army but was induced into the armed forces by his government. Before going to war, he was a farmer who planted flowers and sold them to the public. When Uncle Fred came back from war, he was wearing old clothes. It was evident that he had had no easy life. He was a tired man who needed a lot of rest, both physically and mentally. After greeting his sister and his nephew, he mumbled that all he wanted was bread, sleep, and tobacco. That is a clear indication of a tired man. Krebs on the other hand, still behaves like before going to war. He is relaxed, slow, true to his name which has a similar sound to “crab”, he stays at his mother’s home. He walks up and down the mall, looking at women and yet doesn’t want to have a relationship. Uncle Fred is a man of peace, as his name has the German sound of the word “frieda” meaning peace. He loves flowers which are a symbol of love. Further, he doesn’t want to talk about the war.

Krebs’ indication of character is also seen when he was speaking to his mother. When his mother was told him that he could use his father’s car if he wanted to, his response was that his mother is the one who persuaded the father to say so. He also told his mother that he doesn’t love anybody. His mother got hurt by what he said and when she cried he started to tell her that he did not intend to hurt her and he was sorry. Krebs said he was sorry but he really didn’t mean it, he enjoyed to see his mom unhappy. Uncle Fred may have been eating and sleeping at the beginning, but all he needed was time to heal from the war experiences. He wanted to get involved. He also wanted to help her sister. At first Uncle Fred took all his belongings and ordered his nephew to go and sell them at the market place in exchange for food. He also changed his savings so that they could have something to eat. In his awakening move, we see Uncle Fred waking up one morning, shaving, asking for new underwear, and using his nephew’s bicycle to go away. When he came back, he had a bucket containing flower seedlings, a step towards the revival of his flower planting business. Even though his sister showed doubts as to whether he will make money considering the fact that everyone was poor, he did not lose hope but went ahead and started selling flowers. Krebs doesn’t seem to want to do anything, he is just a receiver. He doesn’t love anyone except his sister, with who he appears to have a very good relationship. Funny enough, the two seem like people who can even have a love affair. Clearly, Krebs is afraid to face the world and meet women of his age.

At the end of ” Soldier’s Home”, we see Krebs and his mother talking and ending their conversation with a prayer. His mother asks him to pray but he asks her to do that for him. After praying, he kissed his mother and left the house. He then said he felt sorry for his mother and doesn’t want to keep his life complicated. This is a sign of someone who doesn’t want to think, work or bring change to his life. In sharp contrast, Uncle Fred in ” My Uncle Fred” has a completely different character and made a lot of changes in his life. He managed his business well and even owned a car. Since Uncle Fred did not have children, his nephew was the one who was to inherit all his riches. The young boy had to study commerce so that he could take care of taxes. This is also an indication that Uncle Fred is a man full of love, just what selling flowers symbolize.